

Docket No. F-8958

Ser. No. 10/573,214

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the claims with the claims provided in the listing below wherein status, amendments, additions and cancellations are indicated.

1. (Currently Amended) An absorbent article in which, comprising:

a liquid permeable front sheet;

a back sheet;

an absorbent body intervenes disposed between [[a]] the liquid permeable front sheet and [[a]] the back sheet, and having opposing outer absorbent body edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the absorbent body;

said absorbent body having a standard-height portion and a middle-height portion layered over said standard height portion in a thickness direction of said absorbent body, said standard-height portion being on a side of the absorbent body facing the back sheet;

said absorbent body having the [[a]] middle-height portion is provided by thickening a front surface of in an approximately center area of the absorbent body;

said middle-height portion having opposing middle-height portion side edge steps and a constant middle-height portion thickness extending from one of said opposing middle-height portion side edge steps to another one of said opposing middle-height portion side edge steps;

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said with respect to a standard-height portion absorbent body, comprising:
extending beyond both said opposing middle-height portion side edge steps to said
opposing outer absorbent body edges, said standard-height portion having a
constant standard-height portion thickness extending from one of said opposing
outer absorbent body edges to another one of said opposing outer absorbent body
edges:

leakage preventing grooves, extending [(to a)] in said longitudinal direction
of the absorbent article which is orthogonal to a lateral direction extending between
said opposing outer absorbent body edges, said leakage preventing grooves being
provided on both sides which sandwich a body fluid discharge portion area in the
area of the middle-height portion of the absorbent body with opposing side walls
of said grooves being formed in said middle-height portion such that depths of said
opposing side walls of said leakage preventing grooves are equal on opposing sides
of said leakage preventing grooves; and

said leakage preventing grooves extending longitudinally at positions
proximate said opposing middle-height portion side edge steps of the middle-height
portion, respectively.

2. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to claim 1,
wherein the leakage preventing grooves are deeper than a thickness of the

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~~middle-height portion said constant middle-height portion thickness and [[reach]] extend into the standard-height portion of the absorbent body.~~

3. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to any one of claims 1 and claim 2, wherein a thinned portion obtained by thinning of absorbent material is provided extending outward from said opposing middle-height portion side edge steps of the middle-height portion by press is formed on outsides of the leakage preventing grooves, said thinned portion have a thinned portion thickness less than said constant middle-height portion thickness.

4. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to any one of claims 1 to 2 claim 1, wherein the middle-height portion extends to first and second middle-height portion longitudinal ends and said absorbent body extends beyond said first and second middle-height portion longitudinal ends, and is formed between front and rear folding line positions for folds, folding the absorbent article in three at the time of individual into a packaging configuration, extend in said lateral direction and are respectively disposed in the standard-height portion beyond said first and second middle-height portion longitudinal ends.

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5. (Currently Amended) The absorbent article according to ~~any one of~~ claims 1 to claim 2, wherein a thickness of the standard-height portion absorbent body is 1 to 3 mm.

6. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 5 wherein said constant middle-height portion thickness is in the range of 1.5 to 8.0 mm.

7. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 6 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H extending from said front sheet to a groove bottom, and said groove depth H is in the range of 0.5 to 9.0 mm.

8. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 7 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H, and a ratio of said groove depth H to said constant standard-height portion thickness is in the range of 0.06 to 3.3.

9. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 8 wherein said leakage preventing grooves have a bottom width B in the range of 0.5 to 5.0 mm.

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10. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 5 wherein said constant middle-height portion thickness is in the range of 2.0 to 4.0 mm.

11. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 10 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H extending from said front sheet to a groove bottom, and said groove depth H is in the range of 2.0 to 6.0 mm.

12. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 11 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H, and a ratio of said groove depth H to said constant standard-height portion thickness is in the range of 0.2 to 0.8.

13. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 1, wherein a thickness of the standard-height portion absorbent body is 1 to 3 mm.

14. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 13 wherein said constant middle-height portion thickness is in the range of 1.5 to 8.0 mm.

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15. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 14 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H extending from said front sheet to a groove bottom, and said groove depth H is in the range of 0.5 to 9.0 mm.

16. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 15 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H, and a ratio of said groove depth H to said constant standard-height portion thickness is in the range of 0.06 to 3.3.

17. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 16 wherein said leakage preventing grooves have a bottom width B in the range of 0.5 to 5.0 mm.

18. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 13 wherein said constant middle-height portion thickness is in the range of 2.0 to 4.0 mm.

19. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 18 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H extending from said front sheet to a groove bottom, and said groove depth H is in the range of 2.0 to 6.0 mm.

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20. (New) The absorbent article according to claim 19 wherein said leakage preventing grooves are formed in said absorbent article to have a groove depth H, and a ratio of said groove depth H to said constant standard-height portion thickness is in the range of 0.2 to 0.8.